Sophomore year:

- Begin to explore what you want to do. Does your field require an advanced degree?
- Meet with your adviser and other faculty members who share your field of study to discuss what graduate school can bring to your future career goals.
- Now is the time to get to know faculty members in your department. They can help you decide which career path to take and can be a valuable resource for recommendations that you will need when you apply for jobs and internships.
- Build your portfolio for graduate school. This will include writing assignments that have focused on your area of study.
- Investigate and take part in activities that will enhance your development as a person.
- Explore internship opportunities to help you better focus on your interests. This will give you a chance to "work" in the field prior to graduate school.
- Make sure you have a clear sense of why you wish to pursue an advanced degree. Graduate schools want to know that you have a plan with a purpose.

Junior Year: Fall & Spring

- Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs
- Talk to your advisor and professors about interests and application requirements
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admissions tests
  - There is financial assistance for these tests. It is located in the "Fee Waiver" section of each Web site. If you receive financial aid as an undergraduate student, you may qualify for this program. For more information, contact the Financial Aid Office.
- Investigate national scholarships
- If you haven't found your way into the Career Center, now is the time to do so. We have many resources to assist you in your evaluation of programs and the career counselors are available to discuss the graduate school admissions process with you.

Junior Year: Summer

- Take required graduate tests
- Write application materials. Prepare your "statement of purpose" essay. This essay, sometimes called a personal statement, will be required by most graduate schools. It is a critical piece of your application package as it will be evaluated by all admissions committees along with your test scores, recommendations and transcripts.
- Have a faculty member, your adviser and a career counselor review this essay with you. The Career Center has many books on the subject. Check for content, grammar and mistakes; it is advisable to have several others look over your essay as well. Remember to clearly communicate your future goals.
- Visit institutions of interest, if possible
- Check on application deadlines and rolling admissions policies
- For medical, dental osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for the national application or data assembly service most programs use
Senior Year: Fall
• Finalize your "statement of purpose" essay and review it with your advisor.
• Secure your recommendations. Ask early!!! You will want to give your recommenders enough time to adequately evaluate your quality as a student. Spend some time with the people you wish to ask to complete this task. Make sure that this will be a positive letter. If there is any hesitation on the part of those completing the recommendations, re-think your request.
  • Give each of the people recommending you a complete packet of information about you. This should include transcripts, "statement of purpose" essay, résumé and anything else you feel might be pertinent to this process.
• Take your standardized admissions test if you have not already done so.
• Complete and send the applications to each school. Get your applications out as soon as possible. Also, make sure to copy everything for your files.
• Request that the Registrar send official transcripts to the schools where you have applied.
• Keep searching for fellowships. Remember that many funding options have early deadlines!
• Take advantage of practice interviews, sometimes called "mock interviews," which can be provided through the Career Center. Some graduate schools may require a personal interview so practice your skills prior to these meetings.
• Contact the Registrar in December to forward your fall semester transcript to all institutions to which you have applied.

Senior Year: Spring
• Prior to the application deadline date, contact each school to verify that they have received your complete application.
• Inquire about financial assistance, if needed. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application. Keep a copy for your file.
• Stay in touch with your references. Keep them informed about the status of your applications.
• Visit each institution that has accepted you into their programs. Evaluate your needs and their offers very seriously to determine the best place for you to continue your studies.
• Contact the "school of your choice" to accept their offer to place your deposit.
• Contact all other schools who have offered you admission and graciously decline their offers.

Summer (after graduation):
• Thank everyone who assisted you in obtaining this goal.
• Begin to prepare yourself for graduate school and your next step to "life after Hood."